

Introduction and Pretest

Your students should be familiar with the proofreading and technology skills in the beginning level of the Writer's Guide before beginning this unit.

Introduction to the Pretest

The pretest should be used to determine if your students are working at the beginning level of report writing. It should be administered and scored before you introduce the students to the content of the unit.

Explain to the students that they're going to have fun learning to be researchers and report writers by writing a report. **When you write a research report, you gather information about a topic. The topic of a report is what the report is about. Often you won't know much about your topic before you begin your research. When you choose a research report topic, it is important to choose something you're interested in learning more about. You'll do research to collect information about the topic. Before you start to work on your research project, I'm going to give you a pretest. The pretest will tell me what you know about doing research and writing a report.**

Administering the Pretest

PREPARATION You'll need a picture of a dentist or a nonfiction book with photographs of a dentist. Some books about dentists are *Dentist/El Dentista*, by Jacqueline Gorman, *The Dentist and You*, by Diane Swanson, and *Danny Goes to the Dentist*, by Barbara Taylor Cork. It's important not to read the book aloud to the students before the pretest.

You'll need a transparency of each pretest page (pages 8–10).

Each student will need a copy of the pretest (pages 8–10), lined paper, and a folder to use as a writing portfolio in which to keep writing assignments.

The pretest for this unit differs from the pretest in other units because of the nature of a research report. Placement in the Report Writing unit is

based on the students' knowledge of the research process rather than on just the content of a piece of sample writing. The pretest should be administered to the whole class before beginning the unit. The pretest has eight parts. Parts 1–7 test the students' basic language skills and their knowledge of the report-writing process. Part 8 tests the students' ability to write a paragraph. The scores for Parts 1–7 and Part 8 are combined to give a total pretest score (see page 12).

It will take more than one day to administer the pretest in order to get the best assessment of your students' writing skill level. Parts 1–7 should be administered on one day. Part 8 should be administered the next day.

Display the first page of the pretest on an overhead projector. **Touch Part 1 on your paper. Touch the words in the box. I'll read the words; you follow along.** Ask the students to repeat each word after you read it. Read the words. Repeat, having the students read the words chorally until they can do so easily. The students should have their pencils down until they are instructed to write.

Words that tell about people are called "who" words. What do we call words that tell about people? **"Who" words.** Words that tell about animals or things are "what" words. What do we call words that tell about animals or things? **"What" words.** You'll sort the words in the box into "who" and "what" words. Touch the first word in the box. What word? *Sally*. Does *Sally* name a person? **Yes.** *Sally* tells who, so you'll write it in the box under the heading "Who." Touch the word *Who*. Write *Sally* in the first box under *Who*.

Touch the next word. What word? *Cup*. Does *cup* name a person? **No.** Does *cup* name a thing? **Yes.** *Cup* names a thing, so you'll write it in the box under the word *What*. Touch the word *What*. Write *cup* in the first box under *What*. Don't give a point for the sample items *Sally* and *cup* when you score the test.

You'll write each word in the box under the correct heading. You may begin now. Put down your pencil when you're finished.

Touch *Part 2*. In this part, you'll decide if a group of words is a sentence. A sentence is a group of words that tells who or what and what happens. What does a sentence tell? *Who or what and what happens*. Touch Item 1. I'll read the item; you follow along. *Helps people*. Is *Helps people* a sentence? Circle *yes* or *no*. Repeat for the remaining items in Part 2.

Display the second page of the pretest. Next page. Touch *Part 3*. Touch Item 1. Item 1 is a sentence. I'll read the sentence; you follow along. *Dogs help police officers with their work*. This sentence must be fixed. There are two things wrong. If a letter is wrong, cross it out, and write the correct letter above it. Add the correct end mark. Then write the sentence correctly on the lines. Repeat for Item 2.

Touch *Part 4*. These are the letters of the alphabet. I'll say each letter. You touch under each letter as I say it. Have the students repeat each letter after you say it.

This is hard. I'm going to ask you to write some letters. Listen carefully because I'm going to say each instruction only once. Touch Item 1. Write the letter that comes before *M*. Pause for the students to write. Touch Item 2. Write the letter that comes after *X*. Pause. Touch Item 3. Write the letter that comes before *G*. Pause. Touch Item 4. Write the letter that comes after *Q*. Pause. Touch Item 5. Write the letter that comes after *D*.

Dentists are important people. They help us take good care of our teeth. Raise your hand if you've been to a dentist. Tell us about your visit to the dentist. Call on a few students to share their experiences. Show the students *one* picture of a dentist at work. Display the picture where the students can easily see it as they complete the remainder of the pretest. You'll use this picture to help you write some things about a dentist. Look carefully at the picture, and get ready to write about the things you see.

Touch *Part 5*. Touch Item 1. Tools are what a worker uses to do a job. On Line 1, write a sentence that tells one tool a dentist uses.

Touch Item 2. Tasks are what workers do. On Line 2, write a sentence that tells one task a dentist does.

Next page. Point to the dentist in the displayed picture. Let's pretend this dentist has come to visit our class. Each of you may ask the dentist one question. Touch *Part 6*. Write your question on the lines.

Touch *Part 7*. When people do research, they collect information. They don't copy all the information. They write only the most important words to help them remember the information. These are called key words. What do we call important words that help us remember information? *Key words*.

Touch Item 1. I'll read the item; you follow along. *Dentists use mirrors and gloves*. This sentence is about the tools dentists use in their work. Circle the two most important key words about tools I should remember from this sentence.

Touch Item 2. I'll read the item; you follow along. *My dentist has good eyesight*. This sentence is about something dentists should have. Circle the two most important key words that tell the important thing dentists should have that I should remember from this sentence.

Touch Item 3. I'll read the item; you follow along. *His dentist fixes cavities*. This sentence is about one of the things dentists do. Circle the two most important key words about what dentists do that I should remember from this sentence.

Touch *Part 8*. Now you'll write a paragraph about dentists on these lines. In your paragraph, you can tell whatever you want about the work of a dentist. Use your best writing. Give the students time to write. When all the students have finished their paragraphs, ask them to check for correct capital letters, for sentence end marks, and for spelling. Tell them to fix any mistakes. The students need not write a final copy of their paragraphs.

Use the rubric (pages 11–12) to score the pretest and to determine each student's appropriate placement in the program.

Background Information

In this unit, the students will write reports on community workers. If your social studies curriculum includes a unit on community workers, you may be able to integrate this report-writing unit with the social studies unit, allowing you more thorough coverage of both curriculum areas.

If your students are beginning writers, you may wish to use writing buddies or adult volunteers to help the students record key information from their interviews and to proofread and word process their final drafts. Refer to the Writer's Guide for suggestions to facilitate the use of writing buddies or adult volunteers.

This unit will be most effective if each student chooses a different community worker to research. You may wish to read the list of occupations found on the United States Department of Labor Bureau of Statistics Web site (www.bls.gov/oes/1999/oes_stru.htm) so you can help the students expand their concept of the kinds of work done in their community. Because the students will be conducting interviews with community workers, you may wish to focus on occupations common in your community. Many primary students don't have a good understanding of what their parents, grandparents, or other family members do at work. You may wish to have your students use family members as interview subjects. An alternative is to have the students interview someone on the school staff. The students could also interview the same person in a group interview.

An efficient way to conduct these interviews is to have all your students complete their interviews at the same time on a "Career Day." Depending on the skill level of your students, you may have them conduct the interviews and record key information independently, conduct the interviews and have an older "writing buddy" act as secretary to record the key information, or tape the interviews and write the key information from the tapes at a later time.

You may wish to take photographs of the students with the community workers they're interviewing.

The students will complete a picture study as one of the activities in this unit. Collect library and other materials, including magazines, pamphlets, and nonfiction books, for this activity. If your school has a librarian, you may want to plan cooperatively so the materials your students need are available.

Useful Reference Materials

Community Helpers Series, Bridgestone Books, Mankato, Minnesota (twenty-four easy-to-read illustrated books, each focusing on a specific community helper)

Community Helpers from A to Z, by Bobbie Kalman, Crabtree Publishing Company, New York, 1998

Name _____ Date _____

Pretest

Part 1

Sally cup Fred pin cow mom boy ant

Who	What
Sally	cup
Fred	pin
mom	cow
boy	ant

Part 2

- Helps people. Yes No
- Farmers grow food. Yes No
- The doctor. Yes No
- Teachers help children learn. Yes No

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Name _____ Date _____

Part 3

1. ^Dogs help police officers with their work.^O
Dogs help police officers with their work.

2. ^Did the kind nurse fix your cut?^A
Did the kind nurse fix your cut?

Part 4

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

1. L 2. Y 3. F 4. R 5. E

Part 5

1. Idea: A dentist uses a mirror.
(Accept reasonable responses.)

2. Idea: A dentist fixes teeth.
(Accept reasonable responses.)

Name _____ Date _____

Part 6

Idea: How do you help people?
(Accept reasonable responses that are questions.)

Part 7

1. Dentists use (mirrors) and (gloves).
2. My dentist has (good) eyesight.
3. His dentist (fixes) (cavities).

Part 8

(See rubric, Part 8, for scoring guidelines.)

Pretest

Part 1

Sally	cup	Fred	pin	cow	mom	boy	ant
-------	-----	------	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

Who	What

Part 2

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|-----|----|
| 1. Helps people. | Yes | No |
| 2. Farmers grow food. | Yes | No |
| 3. The doctor. | Yes | No |
| 4. Teachers help children learn. | Yes | No |

Name _____ Date _____

Part 3

1. dogs help police officers with their work

2. did the kind nurse fix your cut

Part 4

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____

Part 5

1. _____

2. _____

Name _____ Date _____

Part 6

Part 7

1. Dentists use mirrors and gloves.
2. My dentist has good eyesight.
3. His dentist fixes cavities.

Part 8

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RUBRIC

Scoring Parts 1–7

The student . . .	Possible Points	Points Earned
Part 1 Identifies words that tell who. Identifies words that tell what.	1 point each (6 points total)	
Part 2 Identifies complete and incomplete sentences.	1 point each (4 points total)	
Part 3 Proofreads for capital letter at beginning of each sentence. Proofreads for period at end of telling sentence. Proofreads for question mark at end of asking sentence. Copies sentences correctly. Begins copied sentences with capital letters. Ends copied telling sentence with a period. Ends copied asking sentence with a question mark.	1 point each 1 point 1 point 1/2 point for each word copied correctly, 1/2 point for each correct capital letter, 1/2 point for each correct end mark (13 points total)	
Part 4 Follows instructions for finding letters in the alphabet.	1 point each (5 points total)	
Part 5 Writes a sentence to tell about a tool a dentist uses in his or her work. Writes a sentence to tell one task a dentist does.	1 point if sentence starts with a capital letter 1 point if sentence ends with a period 1 point for a complete sentence 1 point if the sentence is on topic (8 points total)	
Part 6 Writes a question for a dentist about his or her work.	1 point if question starts with a capital letter 1 point if question ends with a question mark 1 point for a complete sentence 1 point if the question is on topic (4 points total)	
Part 7 Identifies key words in sentences.	1 point for each key word correctly identified 1/2 point for each non-key word that is not circled (10 points total)	
Points Earned for Parts 1–7	50 points total	

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RUBRIC

Scoring Part 8

- Give the student a score of 0 if there is no evidence of the element.
- Give the student a score of 1 for each element at the emergent or minimum level.
- Give the student a score of 3 for each element at a satisfactory level.
- Give the student a score of 5 for each element at the mastery level.

Evaluating the Elements of a Short Report Paragraph	
The author of this paragraph . . .	Points Earned
Opens the paragraph with a topic sentence.	
Writes at least three detail sentences.	
Ends the paragraph with a closing sentence.	
Stays on topic.	
Varies the first words of sentences.	
Indents to show the beginning of the paragraph.	
Uses conventional spelling at a developmentally appropriate level.	
Uses conventions of capitalization for the beginning of sentences.	
Uses correct end marks.	
Presents paragraph in a legible manner.	
Points Earned for Part 8 (Maximum of 50 points)	

Subtotal Score, Parts 1–7 _____

Subtotal Score, Part 8 _____

Total Pretest Score _____

If the student scores . . .	
85–100 points	Administer the pretest for the intermediate level of Report Writing.
20–84 points	The student is properly placed in the beginning level of Report Writing.
0–19 points	Administer the placement test for <i>Language for Learning</i> , an SRA program, or place the student in a lower-level language program.